

CROUSE HOUSE

51-53 EAST MAIN STREET

Conventional in shape and size (L-shape with its main street section being three bays long and three stories high), it would be easy to sluff this 1870 building aside as yet another "integral and representative piece of the Westminster vernacular streetscape." However, it would be better to admit that the building is not up to the usual high local standard. Its ground floor woodwork, while correct in intention, is not particularly well executed, the roof's brackets and the general eaves treatment is unexciting. But perhaps the greatest flaw is that its builder, apparently, was not blessed with the ability to create a pleasing pattern working with only solids and voids. This normal mastery of the basics is probably the most pleasing feature of Westminster's architecture, and was one that lasted for generations surviving stylistic changes and fashions.

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST

Carr 418
0704184511

INVENTORY FORM FOR STATE HISTORIC SITES SURVEY

1 NAME

HISTORIC

A. H. Wentz Jewelers

AND/OR COMMON

Offices of H. & R. Block

2 LOCATION

STREET & NUMBER

51-53 East Main Street (MD 32)

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

___ VICINITY OF

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

7

STATE

Maryland

COUNTY

Carroll

3 CLASSIFICATION

CATEGORY

___ DISTRICT

☒ BUILDING(S)

___ STRUCTURE

___ SITE

___ OBJECT

OWNERSHIP

___ PUBLIC

☒ PRIVATE

___ BOTH

PUBLIC ACQUISITION

___ IN PROCESS

___ BEING CONSIDERED

STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED

___ UNOCCUPIED

___ WORK IN PROGRESS

ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED

___ YES: UNRESTRICTED

☒ NO

PRESENT USE

___ AGRICULTURE

☒ COMMERCIAL

___ EDUCATIONAL

___ ENTERTAINMENT

___ GOVERNMENT

___ INDUSTRIAL

___ MILITARY

___ MUSEUM

___ PARK

☒ PRIVATE RESIDENCE

___ RELIGIOUS

___ SCIENTIFIC

___ TRANSPORTATION

___ OTHER

4 OWNER OF PROPERTY

NAME

The Link, Inc.

Telephone #: 848-4360

STREET & NUMBER

7 Locust Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

___ VICINITY OF

STATE, zip code

Maryland 21157

5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION

COURTHOUSE,
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Carroll County Office Building

Liber #: 368

Folio #: 488

STREET & NUMBER

Center Street

CITY, TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS

TITLE

None

DATE

___ FEDERAL ___ STATE ___ COUNTY ___ LOCAL

DEPOSITORY FOR
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

7 DESCRIPTION

CONDITION		CHECK ONE	CHECK ONE
<input type="checkbox"/> EXCELLENT	<input type="checkbox"/> DETERIORATED	<input type="checkbox"/> UNALTERED	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ORIGINAL SITE
<input type="checkbox"/> GOOD	<input type="checkbox"/> RUINS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ALTERED	<input type="checkbox"/> MOVED DATE _____
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> FAIR	<input type="checkbox"/> UNEXPOSED		

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The building now housing the offices of H & R Block, 51-53 East Main Street, faces the north side of that street (St. Route 32) about 60 feet east of its intersection with Locust Alley in Westminster. The building, at least its south (entrance) facade, is probably little changed from its original appearance. On the ground floor, a recessed, largely-glassed door is the easternmost bay. It is, as noted, recessed about 3 feet from the main wall of the building, a wall that has its ground floor delineated by means of various wooden devices. The space the door occupies is enframed in plain wooden trim, as is the large plate glass display window that fills the western two-thirds of that floor; a series of recessed panels, about 2 feet high, runs along the bottom of the window; a row of small, frosted-glass panels runs along the top. All this window and door - is covered by a two-part entablature which runs across the entire south front of the building, and is "supported" by a pair of small scroll brackets which flank the door area and a single, bracket at the western end of the window area; those by the door have pelleted decorations and an unusual cloven-hoof applique at their base.

Above, there are three, regularly-spaced, double-hung sash windows per floor; windows have one-over-one panes and are simply enframed, having as their only enrichment, peeling wooden sills and 3 course gauged flat arches. The 5 course common bond brick wall itself formerly painted white, is also peeling. The sagging two-part entablature finishes the roof on this facade; four pairs of mild scroll brackets, symmetrically placed about the windows, support the cornice and add a curving contrast to the row of dentils which are associated with the cornice. The west facade of the building is a party wall with "The White Palace". The building is covered with a gable roof which, in turn, is covered in sheet metal; the southern slope of the roof is a predictable length and pitch, but the northern slope extends about 60 feet to the north finally creating the roof of the three-tier porch which covers the north facade of the building. Each floor of the porch has an eastern 4-panel door in a central 1/1 window. The top floor has an extra glass and aluminum storm window between the door and the central window, and both the second and third stories have their western third sheathed in boards; the sheathing is centrally pierced by a 6-light casement window. Single flights of wooden steps, rising to the east, lead from the ground to the second floor and from the second to the third floor.

8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION
<input type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION		

SPECIFIC DATES

c. 1870

BUILDER/ARCHITECT

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The significance of 43 East Main Street is, basically, architectural. Its builder was of a conservative bent, choosing to build his house and shop in a manner characteristic of Westminster's buildings in the mid 1800's. Thus, it would be easy to sluff the building aside as yet another "integral and representative piece of the Westminster vernacular streetscape." However, it would be better to admit that the building is not up to the usual high local standard; its ground floor woodwork, while correct in intention, is not particularly well executed; the roof's brackets and the general eave treatment is unexciting; but perhaps the building's greatest flaw is that its builder, apparently, was not blessed with the ability to work with the simplest bits of architectural language - the ability to create a pleasing pattern working with only solids and voids. This normal mastery of the basics, is probably the most pleasing feature of Westminster's architecture, and was one that lasted for generations and survived stylistic changes and fashions. But it would be possible to create an argument in defense of the building: that its stolidness acts as a fine foil to the almost Baroque splendors of the adjoining "White Palace".

In history, however, the building is not linked with the "White Palace", but with no. 55 East Main Street, Schmitt's Rexall. When Crouse divided lot 5 in "Winter's Addition", the western half went to Lantz, the eastern half, our property here, stayed with the Crouse family. Ira Crouse's children, Laura, Ella, and Benjamin, inherited the lot; on May 12, 1888, Benjamin sold his interest to his sisters for \$4500 - certainly indicating the existence of our building (Carroll County Deed Book 68, Page 14). The City Directory, published the year before, lists one H. Wentz as having a jewelry store in the premises, the space for which he apparently rented from the Crouses. The Misses Crouse sold the property to Clara L. Cassell on April 3, 1905 for \$7000 (101/200); Clara Cassell then passed title to John E. Clifford and his wife, Anna, on June 3, 1941 (171/477). The widowed Mrs. Clifford passed title to the present owners on January 9, 1964, in deed (368/488).

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

CONTINUE ON SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY

10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY _____

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

Being the western half of lot 5 as shown on a map of "Winter's Addition to Westminster" as recorded among the Land Records in Frederick County in Book JS 2, Page 195, 196.

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE

COUNTY

STATE

COUNTY

11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

Christopher Weeks, Consultant

February, 1977

ORGANIZATION

Westminster Historical Sites Survey

DATE

STREET & NUMBER

c/o City Hall - Public Works Department

TELEPHONE

CITY OR TOWN

Westminster

STATE

Maryland

The Maryland Historic Sites Inventory was officially created by an Act of the Maryland Legislature, to be found in the Annotated Code of Maryland, Article 41, Section 181 KA, 1974 Supplement.

The Survey and Inventory are being prepared for information and record purposes only and do not constitute any infringement of individual property rights.

RETURN TO: Maryland Historical Trust
The Shaw House, 21 State Circle
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
(301) 267-1438



CARR 418

51-53 E. Main St.

Westminster 2/77

C. Welch

N. Jacobs



CARL 418²
51-53 Pt. Main St.
Westminster
2/77 S. Jacinto
C. Vech